KNIGHTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1951

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KNIGHTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1951

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Clerk. J.A. Jones. F.C.C.S; A.I.A.C.

Medical Officer of Health. J.G. Garman. M.R.C.S; L.R.C.P.

Sanitary Inspector. D. Llewellyn. A.R. San Inst; M.S.I.A;
Certified Sanitary and Meat & Food Inspector.

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Knighton Rural District Council.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the year ended December 31st. 1951.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Knighton Rural District Council. August 1952.

Mr Chairman and Gentlemen.

It is my privilege to submit my Eighth Annual Report upon the Vital Statistics; Sanitary conditions and general health in the Rural Distict of Knighton.

Ministry of Health Regulations require that the Medical Officer of Health shall submit not only details of Vital Statistics and particulars of Infectious disease, but also an account of sanitation in the Area; Water supplies; Refuse disposal; Drainage; Housing and other matters which come within his purview.

Social conditions generally-as they affect your District- have differed little from those of previous years, and the same applies to the geographical conditions in the Area.

Agricultural workers-men and women alike- form a large proportion of the residents.

The District has long been regarded as a healthy one, and amenable to good sanitary conditions. The natural advantages have been developed and the health of the District may fairly be said to be good.

It is very gratifying to be able to record unparalled improvement in the sanitary condition of the district, with the consequent decline in the number of cases of infectious disease.

As will be seen from the information tabulated under the heading of "Schools" there have been no school closures during the year.

Much work has been done in regard to housing, and much time has been devoted to this branch of activity. Good results have been secured in improving existing houses.

STATISTICS.

Total area (in acres) of the District.	88,872.
Population. Extimated mid-year.	3,201.
Number of inhabited houses.	1,025.
Rateable Value.	21,137.
Sum represented by a Penny Rate.	85.

BIRTHS.

The number of births registered to resident parents in the Rural Area during the year reached 46; compared with 39 for 1950; 39 for 1949; 35 for 1948; and 45 for 1947 respectively.

Of the births 22 were males and 24 females (41 being legitimate and 5 illegitimate.

This gives a birth rate of 14,3 per 1,000 of the population of the Area compared with 15.5 for England and Wales.

DEATHS.

The total number of deaths at all ages for the year was 35, the rate being 11.0 per 1,000 of the whole population, compared with 34 deaths for

the previous year, with a rate of 10.5.

The death rate for England and Wales for the year is 12.5.

No deaths of non-residents took place in the District, whilst 10 deaths of persons belonging to the District occurred in Public Institutions outside the District.

Deaths were 11 fewer than the number of births it will be noted.

In 25 cases (11 males and 14 females) death occurred at the age of 65 or upwards, and 9 had attained the ripe old age of 85 to 95 years.

Three of the 35 deaths were of children under one year.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

There were three deaths of infants under one year of age compared with two for the previous year. This gives an Infantile mortality rate of 65.2. per 1,000 live births, compared with 29.6. for England and Wales.

The deaths were of two boys of 1 hour and 11 hours respectively and one girl of 10 days, the causes being due to (a) congenital abnormality, (b) cerebral haemorrhage, and (c) congenital heart disease.

ANTE-NATAL Clinical and Treatment Centres.

District Nurses continue to render useful service in Maternity and general cases, while residents in the Rural District are able to attend Ante-Natal Infant Welfare and Tuberculosis Clinics.

An Ambulance service operates for Infectious disease, and another where accidents are dealt with.

Treatment of Venereal diseases can be had at the Hereford and Shrewsbury Hospitals, both of which are within reasonable distance.

ORTHOPAEDIC SCHEME.

This scheme covers children under school age, school children and adults. Clinics are held fortnightly at Llandrindod Wells.

SCHOOL MEDICAL SERVICE.

In connection with this service, as a result of defects found at medical inspections, provision is made for certain forms of treatment.

An eye clinic centre is established at Knighton. The number of children examined has increased during recent years.

A Dental scheme is established and all Elementary school children are examined and treatment is carried out if the parents agree.

CONTAGIOUS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

As the majority of cases of the commoner infectious diseases occur among children, the visits of School Nurses to the homes have been useful in connection with prevention and treatment.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE, SCARLET FEVER.

Five cases were notified during the year, all of children of school age four in July and one in December. Four houses only were affected.

A number of children in the homes involved were excluded from school until all risk of spreading the infection was over.

All the patients were treated at home, and in each case made good progress.

It was alleged that a child, resident at Knucklas, was suffering from Scarlet fever during the School Summer holiday. Inquiries were made both at the home of the child and from the Medical Practitioner in attendance, when it was found that the child was not suffering from this disease, but from other causes.

During visits to Llanbister in Septe ber it was stated that a number of children were suffering from this disease, but visits paid to the homes concerned revealed complete freedom from the disease.

DIPHTHERIA.

There have been no cases notified, and it is pleasing to record that the District had been free of cases of this disease since early 1941.

MEASLES.

Quite a number of children of school age were notified to be suffering from this disease during April, May, June and July, though happily the attendance at the respective schools was not so badly affected as to justify closure.

Several cases of German Measles also occurred among school children at Whitton and Llangunllo.

ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA.

The District has been completely free from this disease for many years past.

INFLUENZAL PNEUMONIA.

Three cases of Pneumonia were notified during November, the patients being a young man of 28 years, and two women of 50 and 55 years respectively.

All three patients made good recovery.

MEMBRANEOUS GROUP.

No cases have been notified in the District for some years past. A number of children of school age suffered from Whooping Cough, a few cases occurring at Felindre during April, while several others were at Llangunllo, Llanbister and Llanbadarn-fynydd, the latter cases being reported in late November and early December.

TYPHOID FEVER.

No cases in 1951, nor have any been notified in the District for many years past.

PUERPERAL FEVER.

No case was notified during the year, the last case reported in the Area was in June 1944.

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

This disease is defined as a purulent discharge from the eyes of an infant occurring within 21 days from the date of its birth.

Happily no cases have been notified in the Rural District during the year, nor have any occurred for the past 12 years.

ERYSIPELAS.

No cases in 1951. Previous to one case notified during 1950, there had been no case in the Rural District since 1940.

CANCER.

No deaths have been recorded of persons of either sex as having suffered from malignant disease.

TUBERCULOSIS.

No cases reported during the year. One death took place of an elderly man of 78 years who had been employed for the greater part of his life as a Colliery labourer, but had been a resident of your Rural District for some years past.

POLIO-MYELITIS.

No cases notified during 1951.

A case of suspected Polio-Meyelitis was reported as having occurred at Felindre during August, and the patient- a married woman of32 years- was removed for observation to Monkmoor Hospital, Shrewsbury where she was found to be suffering from other causes than this disease, and discharged from hospital within a week.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND SANITATION.

There have been no school closures during the year on account of infectious disease.

Health conditions generally as they affected children of school age, of both sexes, were very good.

Visits were paid at intervals to all schools in the Area to enquire as to the water supply available for use for drinking and Canteen purposes.

In no case was any shortage reported as having taken place.

Cleansing and decoration work of walls and ceilings etc. of classrooms, cloakrooms and outbuildings at a number of the schools in the Area has been carried out, and the school premises concerned are now in an excellant hygienic condition.

SCHOOL CANTEENS.

Mid-day meals are provided and served to practically 95% of the children of all ages and both sexes attending the 13 schools in use in the Rural Area.

MILK SUPPLY.

Considerable interest is being shown in regard to the production of milk in your Area, by reason of the standard set to all concerned in the industry as to the equipment of buildings for housing of dairy hords and methods employed in the production and handling of milk.

As in past years regular visits of inspection of all farm buildings have been carried out during the year.

Changes of ownership and occupation of various farm property have taken place in quite a number of instances.

Your Council are still responsible for ensuring that the water supply and drainage arrangements of farm buildings used for housing of dairy herds are satisfactory.

PUBLIC HEALTH(PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS) REGULATIONS.1925.

No action on the part of your Officers has been necessary under the above Regulations, the general health and conditions of life of those engaged in the milk industry having continued to reach a high standard.

None the less, there has been no relaxing of the vigilance necessary to prevent the spread of infection by tuberculosis through the medium of milk.

Enquiries are regularly made into the health of members of the households engaged in the production and handling of foodstuffs, and especially, as stated, of the milk supply.

There as been no occasion to exercise the powers of Local Authorities in these matters during the year.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS' ACTS.

No cases of Anthrax in animals or any other disease under the above Acts have occurred in the District during the year.

HOUSING.

The housing conditions of the Rural District have been kept under constant observation during the year with the view to the effecting of repairs and improvements when such works were found necessary to be carried out to comply with the Public Health and Housing Acts,

Many properties have been satisfactorily dealt with, and considerable sums of money have been spent in renovations and general repairs in order to bring the dwelling houses up to a reasonable structural and sanitary condition consistent with decent habitation.

In most cases the owners are quite willing to consider suggestions for the improvement of the conditions under which their tenants live, and their readiness in giving effect to such recommendations as are made from time to time shows that they have the welfare of their tenants in mind.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The general question of the water supply in the District has had a good deal of attention during the year.

As regards the supplies generally, these are both ample in quantity and good in quality.

None of the waters in the case of piped supplies are known to have plumbo-solvent action, no lead pipes being in use as part of the systems, so that in no case had contamination from, or by, lead taken place.

The question of providing improved water services in eight of the Villages involved continues to have your serious consideration, and a number of Schemes are being proceeded with. Your Engineers have made a complete survey of the supplies to be used.

Every known and possible source of supply within reasonable distance of the Villages concerned has been thoroughly explored.

Gaugings of the dry weather yield have been taken in all cases, and many samples of the waters obtained for both Chemical and Bacteriological examination.

FOOD SUPPLY AND INSPECTION.

The question of food supply is one which receives constant attention from your Sanitary Inspector, who holds the Diploma of the Royal Sanitary Institute for Food and Meat Inspectors.

In addition to visits which are paid to all places where food is produced or prepared for human consumption, every opportunity is taken to examine Fishmongers and Fruiterers' Vans, and also Butchers' Vans, while delivering in the District.

Great care is exercised by most of those responsible for the goods displayed in this manner, and by reason of the generally high standard maintained in this direction, there has been no occasion when official action was necessary.

The meat of animals killed by farmers and cottagers has been of a generally good quality.

LAND WORKERS HOSTEL, WHITTON.

The large range of buildings erected at Whitton in 1941/42 by the Ministry of Agriculture to house Land workers has now ceased to be used for that purpose, the whole of the buildings having been closed since the early part of the year under review.

At the time of closing the buildings there were 11 men (Poles) in occupation, with a staff of four persons in charge. The workers were transferred to the Hostel at Crossgates, and the services of the staff were dispensed with.

SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS.

An immense volume of improvements of all kinds has resulted in regard to housing and water supplies. Large sums of money have been spent in carrying out repairs, structural and sanitary improvements. The work has involved many meetings on the spot with Owners, Agents, and others affected, but amicable arrangements have generally been reached between the parties concerned and your Officer,

Many types of cottages as well as better class properties have been dealt with, and the improvements effected have been of a varied and general character, all of which have tended to make for the contentment and happiness of those immediately concerned.

OVERCROWDING.

In no case has it been found necessary to take official action in regard to overcrowding conditions in any part of your District, though there have been quite a number of cases where families have been dealt with because of conditions which were considered to be of an unsatisfactory nature.

KEEPING OF ANIMALS.

In quite a number of cases in various parts of the District it has been found necessary to take official action requiring the remedying of conditions in respect of the keeping of animals-mainly pigs- both on the score of their being insanitary and offensive.

The animals were housed under very insanitary conditions, the buildings being unsuitable and the general surroundings most unsatisfactory.

The animals in all cases were removed and the old unsatisfactory premises ceased to be used for that purpose. Where, however, suitable plots of ground were available within easy distance, owners of such animals have been encouraged to erect a better type of pigsty, with suitable flooring and drainage, etc.

COMPLAINTS.

There have been very few complaints made or received as to the existance of nuisances in any part of the District, This is attributed largely to the fact that the frequency of the visits paid to every Parish anables your Sanitary Inspector to keep himself in touch with any condition likely to give cause for complaints, and thus be able to deal expeditiously with unsatisfactory conditions while in their early stages.

FARM WATER SUPPLIES.

It is gratifying to record that for some years past many owners of, and Agents for, farm properties situate in almost every one of the 16 Parishes in the Rural District, have made good use of the facilities availabe under the various Regulations to provide water supplies from untapped sources on hills to their respective properties, ranging in distance from 100 yards to 400 yds and over, towards the cost of which schemes, amounting in many cases to hundreds of pounds, the Ministry, through the County Agricultural Committee, have made grants of 40% to 50%.

Such applications for grants have been referred to your Sanitary Inspector who has to satisfy the Ministry Officers that the quality of the water to be harnessed and piped to the farm premises is wholesome and of an adequate volume.

An investigation has been made into the sources of supply, and a sample of water taken in each case for analysis, the result of which has been forwarded to the appropriate Department concerned.

Where and when such schemes have been laid, the occupiers of the farm premises affected have universally expressed their keen appreciation of the advantages and benefits from such schemes.

SANITATION OF LICENSED PREMISES.

Special visits of inspection of all Licensed (public house) premises in the Rural District have been carried out, at regular intervals, by your Sanitary Inspector, with the view to observing the conditions under which the public conveniences (water closets and urinals) provided for the use of customers of both sexes are maintained.

All the licensed premises concerned have been brought up to a modern standard of both indoor and outdoor sanitary accommodation.

Conditions affecting all such premises were found to be well kept and maintained.

TENTS, VANS AND SHED ERECTIONS.

Comparatively few of these erections were met with during the year under review. For the past few years thay have been discouraged in the Rural District because of the absence of proper sanitary conditions. Your Sanitary Inspector's insistance on such provision being made makes the owners of such dwellings avoid the District.

The few cases of Caravans met with were mainly those who were passing through the district to other areas.

RIVER POLLUTION.

The rivers and streams in the District are the subject of constant observation by your Sanitary Inspector to ensure that nothing offensive finds its way into them to effect the condition of the water.

Generally the rivers and streams can be said to be quite free from sewerage and works trade refuse.

RODENT CONTROL, PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT -1949.

During the year under review the Pest Operator-jointly employed by your Council and Rhayader Rural Council- has carried out a detailed survey of dwelling houses and farm buildings, when most of the 16 Parishes comprising the Rural District were covered.

A complete list of all properties in the Parishes concerned was prepared by your Sanitary Inspector and furnished to the Pest Operator for his attention. Owners and occupiers alike have asked for service in the

destruction of rats and mice, and such attention having been given has proved to be very successful in their results.

Most farmers in the Area-which is a very wide and scattered one - have contracts with the County Agricultural Committee to deal with the destruction of rodents.

There are no sewers in any part of the Rural Area, nor are there any public refuse tips in use.

MIDWIVES ACT.

The several Nurses engaged by the County Nursung Association carry out the duties of Health Visitors for the County Council, and those concerned in the administration of the Act are in constant touch with the County Medical Officer of Health.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

The few buildings in the Rural District which come within the scope of this Act were frequently inspected by your Sanitary Inspector, and no contraventions were found requiring official action.

OUTWORKERS.

There are no Out-workers in the Rural Area so far as your Officers are aware.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There are no Common Lodging Houses in the Rural Area, nor are there any Cellar dwellings.

CONCLUSION.

In concluding the Report may I express my sincere thanks to the Council for the support accorded me in the discharge of my duties.

The constant help and co-operation of members is greatly appreciated.

The work is still on the increase, as a result of new legislation introduced from year to year, which widens the scope of the public official's duties.

I would again take this opportunity of expressing to your Sanitary Inspector- Mr. D. Llewellyn- my sincere thanks for his unceasing help and valuable assistance which he has at all times so willingly given. His co-operation and readiness at all times have been invaluable, and he brings, as heretofore, real interest and initiative to his work.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

J.G. GARMAN,

Medical Officer of Health.